



▼HAMPTON♦INSTITUTE▼  
CREATIVE DANCE GROUP



SOUVENIR PROGRAM







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FOR MANY years Hampton Institute has been most interested in the cultural development of the dance. The two most important factors which have been the motivating influences in developing this interest through the years have been, first the recognition of the fact that the dance, whether we will it or not, has a large place in the recreational life of young people. Second, a great native capacity is found to exist in abundance among Negro youth. This capacity, if developed in the field of the creative dance, will have unlimited possibilities to inspire and enrich life, and thus enable our young people to love and appreciate a great racial heritage.

It has been twenty-two years since Hampton gave its first physical education demonstration, designed to show the activities of regular class work. On the first program folk and national dances were given a place. Only six years have passed since 1915 in which such demonstrations have not been a regular part of the school's scheduled programs. During this brief period, there has developed in America, and especially in our schools and colleges, a wider knowledge of and a deeper appreciation for the dance and its place in education and in life.

Is it not appropriate, then, that the Negro who is believed to be able to contribute so much to the cultural development of the dance in America, should now turn to a wiser use of those talents, too often used to degrade rather than to enrich life?

It is a recognized fact that Negro children have a remarkable sense of rhythm and Negro people have been referred to by other races as great dancers and lovers of the dance. In spite of the influence of more than three hundred years of European and American civilization, it is significant that the American today still enjoys those forms of recreation which were most prominent among the native



THE HAMPTON INSTITUTE CREATIVE DANCE GROUP

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Africans before the advent of the slave trader, the explorer, the missionary, and the colonizer.

The African, sometimes called a child of nature, is a pleasure-loving individual, who in his native land hunted, fished, sang, and often gathered around the fire at night to tell or to hear the old tales which had come down as a tribal inheritance. Often these stories were expressed in rhythmic motion to the beat of the drum, or to the sound of some crude instrument or barbaric

song. Therefore, early in the history of the race, the dance was developed as a means of expression and later became the principle form of recreation. When the day's work was done or when there were occasions for rejoicing or even sorrowing, by day or by night, men, women, and children came together and fittingly celebrated with dancing.

When the free life of his native Africa was exchanged for slavery and the plantation, the rigors of his new life, with its enforced labor, certainly were not conducive to the perpetuation of the happy, joyous life he and his ancestors had lived for ages in his native land. Yet these things were a part of his inheritance and were not easily forgotten. They persisted and have remained for more than three hundred years in an entirely different environment, and today they appear as genuinely a part of the Negro life as the organism itself.

The Hampton Institute Creative Dance Group, consisting of thirty-five students, many of whom are taking a major in physical education, is making a tour, April fifth to the fifteenth and appearing in some of the leading educational institutions and cities in the South. Through the type of program offered we hope to suggest some of the possibilities of the dance in our schools and especially a greater use of racial and native material, because we believe this

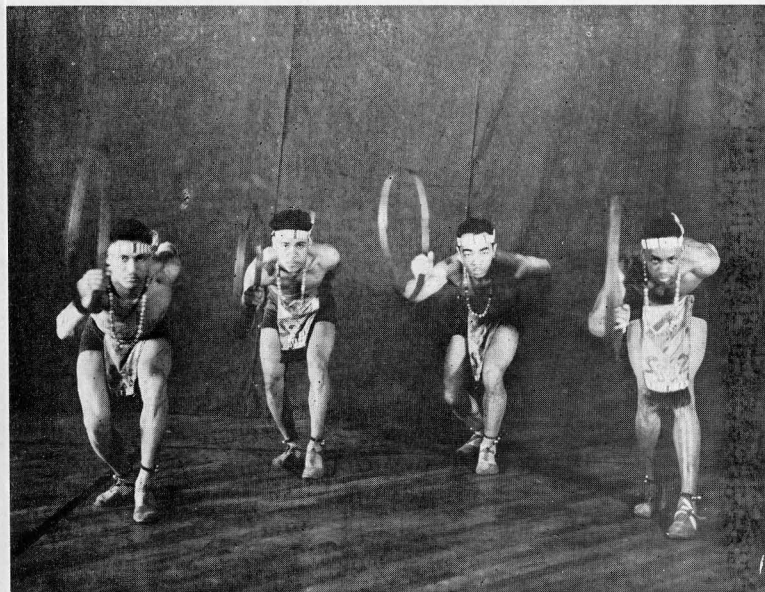
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CHORALE



INDIAN HOOP DANCE



JOURNEYING

offers opportunities to develop innate capacities and talents for cultural and educational ends.

The program presented on the tour covers a wide range of subjects and offers a variety of entertainment that will prove interesting, not only to the lover of the dance, but to the general public as well. The program consists of modern, character, and folk dances, including some of the American Negro of another generation, labor rhythms, spirituals, and African dances—the last, giving something of the tribal life and customs of the native Africans and the great abandon with which they dance.

In the development of modern art in America, the dance is receiving more and more consideration, especially in the large centers of population where appreciative dance audiences are being developed. In the work of the Hampton Institute Creative Dance Group, special effort is being made to develop the dance as a form of expression and to deal with this modern approach to the dance. The Creative Dance Group is under the direction of Charles H. Williams, Supervisor of Physical Education, and Charlotte E. Moton, teacher of physical education in the College.

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE HAMPTON INSTITUTE CREATIVE DANCE GROUP

IN THE SPRING of 1934 during the Anniversary exercises, the physical education department presented a dance program consisting of modern, folk, labor rhythms, spirituals and African dances. The audience composed of students, faculty, local citizens, northern friends of the school, and a special student delegation of about 150 members, representing many of the leading men's and women's colleges of the North and some from the South. The program was received with great enthusiasm on the part of students and visitors.

The first public appearance away from the school was given at the Mosque on March 23, 1935, Richmond, Virginia, under the auspices of the Richmond Chapter of the Hampton Alumni Association with Dr. J. Mercer Ramsey serving as President. (Incidentally, this was the first time Negroes were allowed to use the Mosque, a million-dollar auditorium and one of the finest in the South.) While the



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audience was small, the program was declared by the Press to be an artistic success.

Because of requests from students and others as a result of the success of the Mosque program, the Hampton Administrative Board voted on March 26, 1935, that the program be repeated in Ogden Hall on April 2, 1935. To this program there were gathered more than two hundred local white citizens, in addition to students and members of the faculty.

May 3, 1935, the Dance Group appeared at the Memorial Auditorium in Raleigh, N. C., under the auspices of the Wake County Inter-racial Committee, for the purpose of raising funds to aid in the establishment of a Negro Public Library for Raleigh. Mrs. Pearl L. Byrd, then supervisor of public instruction for North Carolina, and Reverend O. S. Bullock were the moving spirits who made the affair a great success, financially and otherwise.

May 4, 1935, the group appeared at Memorial Hall, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, under the auspices of the University Y.M.C.A., of which Mr. Harry F. Comer is executive secretary. It was through Mr. Comer's efforts that the group appeared at the University. This program marked one of the high lights in the activities of the group. The audience was one of the most enthusiastic and appreciative before which the group has ever danced.

December 6, 1935, the group appeared under the auspices of the Swastika Club at the Booker T. Washington Auditorium, Norfolk, Virginia. Mrs. E. S. Peters, president of the club, was instrumental in presenting the group for the purpose of securing additional funds to be used by the club in bringing Christmas cheer to the poor.

March 9, 1936, the group appeared at the Booker T. Washington School Auditorium in Newport News, Virginia, sponsored by Mrs. E. C. Downing and Mrs. C. T. Erwin for the benefit of the St. Augustine Episcopal Church and Hampton Institute.

May 8, 1936, the group appeared under the auspices of the St. Agatha's Guild of the St. Paul's Episcopal Church at the Newport News High School Auditorium. Mrs. L. C. Branch, prominent in social and community life of the city, was responsible for presenting the group to the white citizens of Newport News.

From the beginning of the activities of the Dance Group in 1934 to the end of the school term in 1936, Mrs. A. Ber-

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JUBA



INTERVAL AT THE FESTIVAL



THE CAKE-WALK

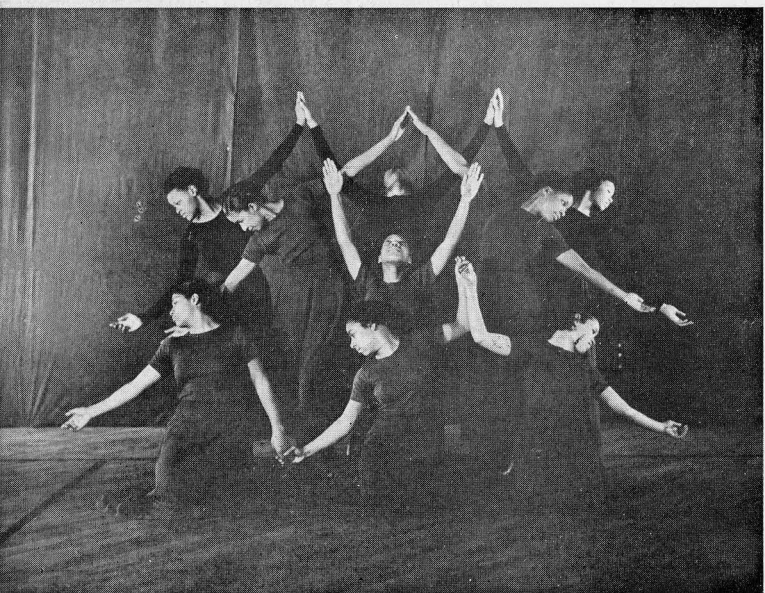




NOBODY KNOWS DE TROUBLE I SEE



CALVARY



WE ARE CLIMBING JACOBS'S LADDER

nice Smothers, Hampton 1929, was a member of the physical education staff and dance instructor. Mrs. Smothers took a major in physical education at Hampton and continued the study of the dance at the University of Wisconsin under Miss Margaret H'Doubler.

At the beginning of the school term, 1936-1937, Miss Charlotte Moton became a member of the physical education staff at Hampton and dance instructor. Miss Moton is a graduate of Tuskegee and the Sargent School of Physical Education in Cambridge, Mass. She studied dancing with Miss Pauline Chellis at the Chellis School of the Dance in Boston.

December 5, 1936, the group appeared at Howard University, Washington, D. C., under the auspices of the Howard Physical Education Forum, a student organization, with Miss Reba Cox as president. This was a rather unique occasion because the members of the Forum, both young men and women, worked very diligently and cooperated one hundred per cent to present the Hampton Dance Group at Howard. The performance won the highest praise from the large enthusiastic audience present.

The itinerary of the Southern tour April 5th to 15th, 1937, is as follows:

April 5th—Dillard High School Auditorium, Goldsboro, N. C.

Sponsor—Dillard High School  
H. V. Brown, Principal

April 6th—Charles T. Walker Public School Auditorium, Augusta, Ga.

Sponsor—The Richmond County Teachers Association  
J. W. Wallace, President

April 7th—Florida A. & M. College, Tallahassee, Florida

J. R. E. Lee, President

April 10th—Tuskegee Institute, Tuskegee, Alabama  
F. D. Patterson, President

April 12th—Morehouse College, Sale Hall  
Sponsor—Booker T. Washington High School, Atlanta, Ga.

G. L. Harper, Principal

April 14th—

Greensboro, N. C.

Sponsor—Greensboro chapter of the Hampton Alumni Association



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## PROGRAM NOTES

**THE CHORAL**, composed by Pauline Chellis, shows in dance form the blending of the voice parts supporting the principal theme as in choral forms.

**THE INDIAN HOOP DANCE.** The more advanced American Indians developed dancing to a remarkable degree of perfection and beauty with a technique that was amazing. Their ceremonial dancing was a spectacle never to be forgotten when seen in its original and authentic form. The Hoop Dance of Woodcraft by the Comanche tribes was an example of the ceremonial dance. The dance on this program is an arrangement of steps and figures danced by these tribes.

**THE ATHLETE.** This dance was composed in honor of the great achievements of the Negro athlete on track and field and in the ring. Some of the different sport activities employed in this composition make it a strenuous dance and a real test of fitness and agility.

### Characteristic Dance Rhythms

**INTERVAL AT THE FESTIVAL**, to music by Debussy, gives the humorous antics of two revellers.

**JUBA** is a very old Negro dance and is said to have been brought from Africa. The tune is a jig-time and most effectively played on the banjo. The dancing was individual, required a fine sense of rhythm, and developed power to do intricate and acrobatic steps of the greatest difficulty. It was popular because it gave opportunity to display unusual skill.

**JOURNEYING** is an impressionistic sketch of a group of weary hitch-hikers.

**THE CAKE-WALK** is an attempt to reproduce the dance as it was done by Negroes forty years ago.

### Negro Spirituals

In using the Spiritual as inspiration for some of the dances, instead of telling the story, the intent has been to express the emotion of the words and music in terms of bodily movement.

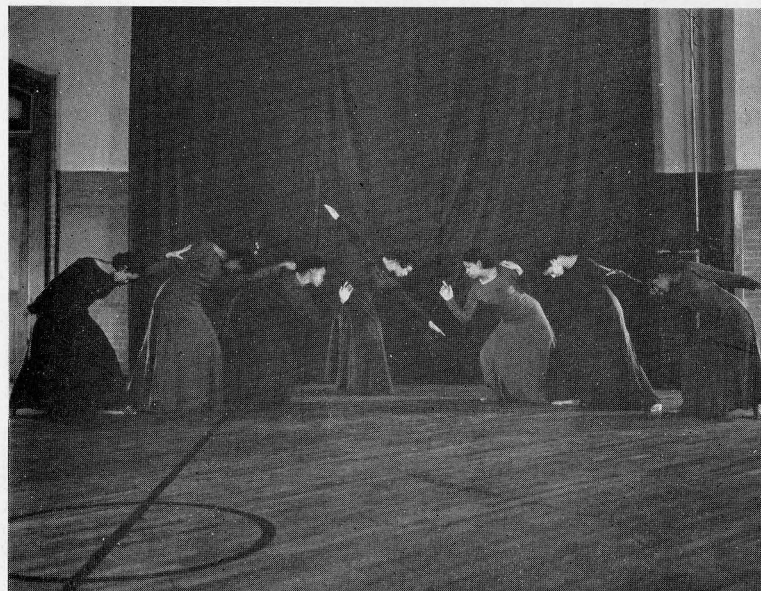
**NOBODY KNOWS THE TROUBLE I'VE SEEN** expresses the suffering of a depressed people. Instead of expressing the separate phrases, the meaning of the Spiritual as a whole has been given.

**CALVARY** is an interpretation of the hope given to the two thieves by the strength and courage of the crucified Christ.

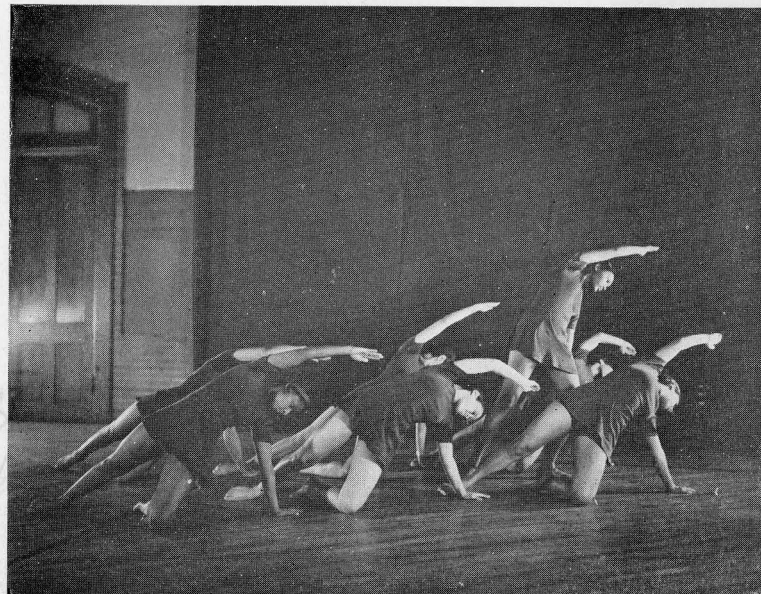
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VARIATIONS

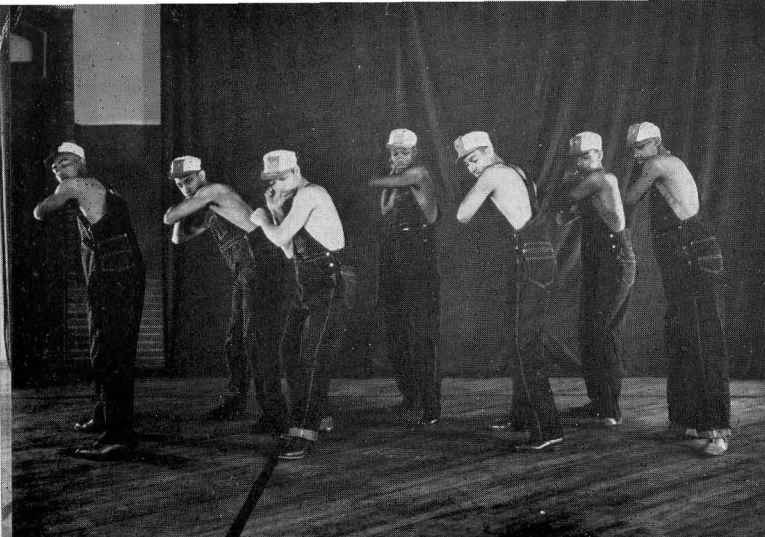


HOPE IN THE NIGHT

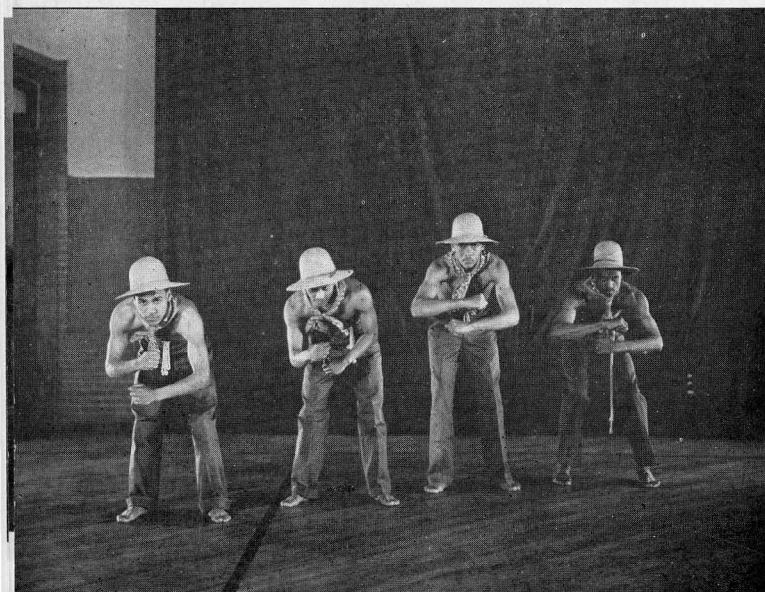


VOLGA BOATMAN

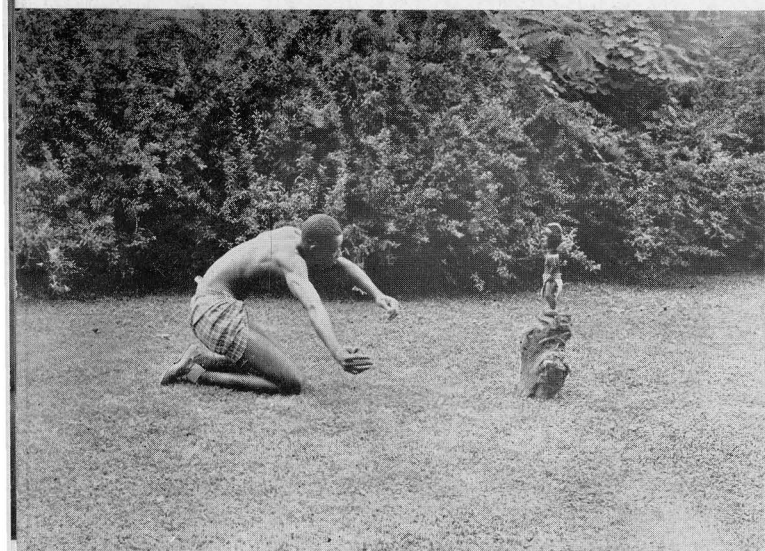




DIS OLE HAMMER



CUTTING THE SUGAR CANE



PAGAN'S PRAYER

WE ARE CLIMBING JACOB'S LADDER—The purpose is to show determined but gradual progress toward the goal of unity. Since this was a favorite Spiritual of Booker T. Washington, this composition is dedicated to him.

VARIATIONS—a dance study of change, starting from a very simple pattern and gradually developing into larger and greater movement, and eventually settling down to the simple fundamentals.

HOPE IN THE NIGHT is symbolic of the power of hope to lighten the enduring burden of life. The music for this dance is an arrangement of the second movement of William L. Dawson's Symphony, by Jennie Moton.

### Labor Rhythms

DIS OLE HAMMER is probably the best known Negro work-song and is called an American classic in its group.

CUTTING THE SUGAR CANE—By Ted Shawn—"Four sugar-field workers on a hot tropical Cuban day work rhythmically at cutting and finding the sugar cane. Noticing the absence of the overseer they give way to a spontaneous rhythmic outburst of joy. In the midst of this the overseer returns and lays a whip across their shoulders, sending them resentfully back to their labor. At the end of the day they take themselves homeward, but not without a momentary remembrance of their joyful truancy."

COTTON NEEDS PICKIN' is one of the many work songs sung by the cotton-field hands in the early plantation days. This song has been interpreted in steps and rhythmic actions characteristic of Negro life.

THE VOLGA BOATMAN, though not employing realistic work gestures, does give the impression of the feelings of riverboat laborers driven by necessity.

### African Dances

MAMAH PARAH is danced on stilts by performers who have a fine sense of equilibrium and balance. They dance before their chiefs on special occasions to the great delight of their fellow tribesmen who always enjoy feats of skill and daring.

THE FANGAI MAN is known as the African killer. When a native feels that he has been greatly wronged by another, to the extent that he desires to have him killed, he goes to the Fangai Man, who performs a ceremony before his client's family, sprinkles medicine to protect them, then places a fatal charm on the enemy after which he dances a dance of joy over the successful outcome of his labors.



WYO MAMIE—It is an African custom that on the night before the wedding, the girl's parents must give their final consent. The nearest relative of the groom brings a beautiful basket filled with gifts for the bride, which is opened after the parents give their consent. After the entering ceremony is performed, the gift from the groom is presented while all sing and dance. At the end of this part of the ceremony the party leaves for the home of the groom where they have a grand jollification, singing and dancing until after midnight. The customary dance on this occasion is Wyo Mamie.

THE WITCH DOCTOR'S DANCE—Among some of the African tribes there is the belief that when articles are stolen, the Witch Doctor has the power to find the thief. He performs his ceremony, sends his detective for the thief who successfully finds him and recovers the lost articles. It is then that the Witch Doctor performs his dance of joy.

OGUGU—According to African tradition, the Ogugu was the most powerful medicine man in the land, even more so than the Witch Doctor with his magic. He was all powerful and surrounded by mystery. Any native who looked the Ogugu in the eyes was sure to lose his sight. The dance is performed in commemoration of the Ancient African Medicine Men.

THE FEAST OF RAMADAN is an annual celebration held by the Mohammedans. It is originally introduced in Northwest Africa by the Arabs. A fast period of two weeks is observed, which is followed by a feast where men, women, and children come together and enjoy themselves with eating, singing, and dancing, beginning about 7 p.m., and lasting throughout the night until late into the next morning.

### PRESS COMMENTS

*The Journal and Guide* (March 30, 1935)—“The Richmond debut of the Hampton Institute Dance Group at the Mosque Saturday night was truly an artistic success . . . Dignity, grace, beauty, and a large variety of innovations marked the lengthy program . . . Probably the most interesting contribution was the ‘African Dances.’ The fervor and frenzy of the performance was marvelous.”

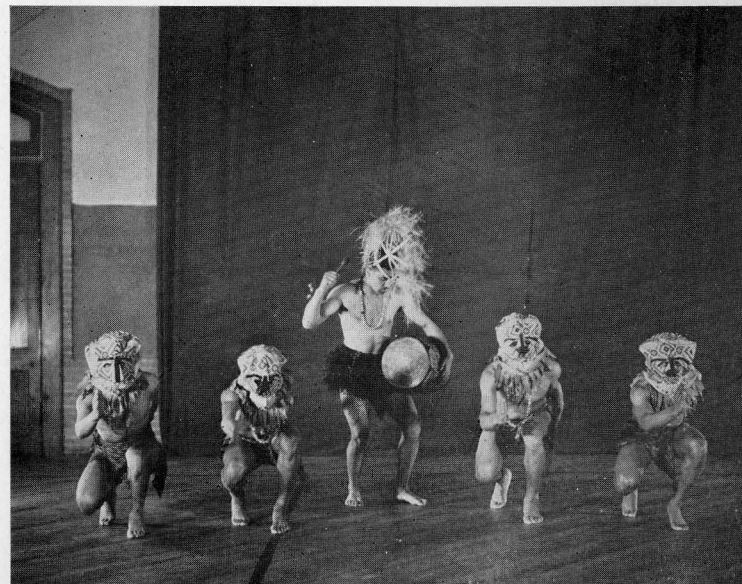
*Carolina Tribune*, Raleigh, N. C. (May 11, 1935)—“The dance presentation proved exceptionally good, and patrons enjoyed a wonderful exhibition of artistic dancing, such as has never been seen in Raleigh before. Over 2,500



WYO MAMIE

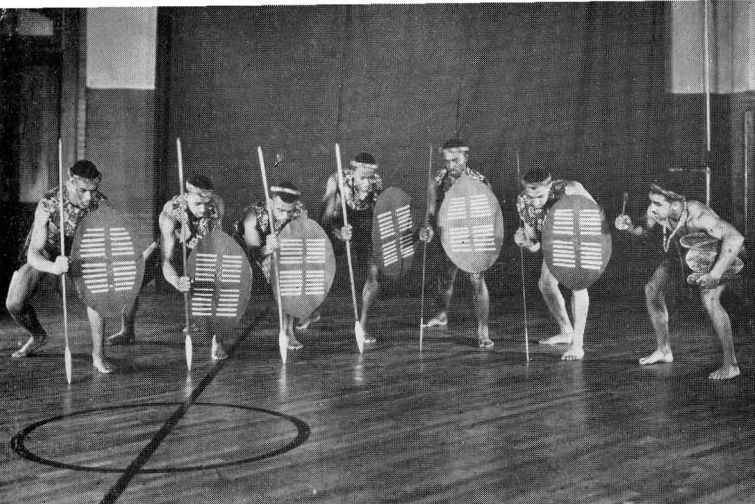


THE WITCH DOCTOR'S DANCE



OGUGU

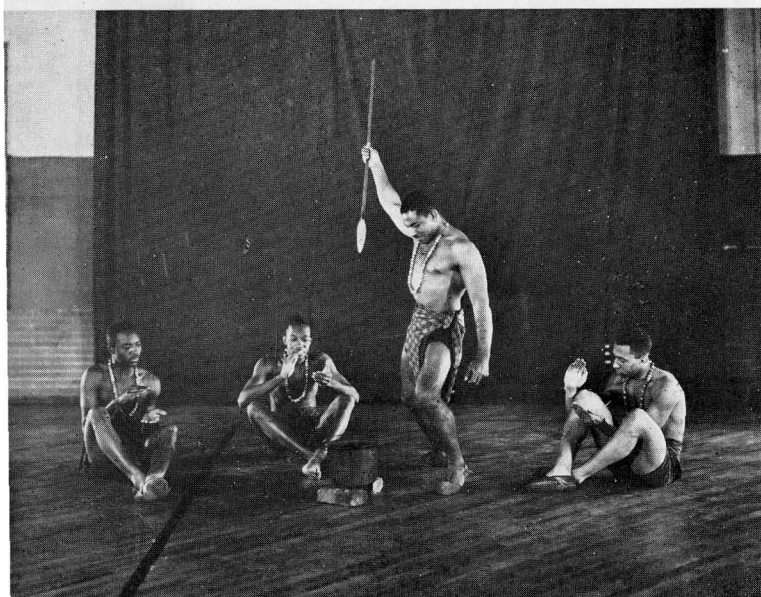




THE ZULA WAR DANCE



THE FEAST OF THE RAMADAM



THE FANGAI MAN

spectators filled the main floor of the mammoth hall, and lusty rounds of applause greeted each dance."

*The Journal and Guide* (December 14, 1935)—"The Hampton Institute Dance Group which appeared at the Booker T. Washington High School Auditorium last Friday night under the auspices of the Swastika Club gave to the jaded Norfolksians something new and novel in the line of an evening's entertainment. With consummate skill, this group of talented young men and women interpreted moods, feelings, customs, and folklore with costume and movement such as has never been seen here . . . The full sway granted has tended to blossom out genius unsuspected."

*The Script* (March 30, 1935)—"The Hampton Institute Creative Dance Group were most successful in their initial appearance when they presented a two-hour program of marvelously done dances at the Mosque, Richmond's most spacious playhouse . . . Beautiful costumes and appropriate backgrounds of lighting and scenery gave the dancers an effect that will long be remembered by those who sat in awe as the Hamptonians proved the statement previously made by their Director that 'there exists among Hampton students a great native capacity for the dance, which if developed in the field of the creative dance, will have unlimited possibilities to inspire and enrich life and thus enable students to appreciate a great racial heritage.' . . . Members of the audience, in discussing the program after it was over, expressed the opinion that while they were reasonably sure that if Hampton promised something worthwhile, it would be worthwhile, they had no idea that it would be in any way as remarkable as it was."

*Professor Frederick H. Koch*, The University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, N. C., (May 14, 1935)—"I was much impressed by your Creative Dance group, especially by your Characteristic Dance Rhythms: *The Train* and *Juba*, and by the exciting African Folk Dances: *Wyo Mamie*, *Wandai*, *The Witch Doctor's Dance*, and *Ogugu* . . . It seems to me you are making an original and distinctive contribution, and I wish you all success!"

*Daily Press* (April 3, 1935)—"Hampton Institute last night introduced a new feature to the local people when the students gave a dance recital in Ogden Hall to a large and appreciative audience. The interpretation of the several numbers was excellent and dancing afforded an opportunity for the participants to show that the race has another field of adventure in the arts."







